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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
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HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

PM Erdogan issues a last warning to Europe - Aksam
Erdogan says EU should show it is not a Christian club -
Milliyet
EU wants 'permanent restrictions' on Turks' labor movement -
Sabah
Greek Cypriots want Cyprus condition at EU summit - Sabah
48 percent of Greeks want Turkey in EU, 45 percent oppose -
Hurriyet
Barry Rubin: Palestine must end terror - Hurriyet
Abbas admits "intifadah" was a mistake - Hurriyet
Turkish engineer abducted in Afghanistan - Milliyet
General Myers takes celebrities to Iraq - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Turkey will not concede at EU summit - Cumhuriyet
EU, Turkey face tough bargaining over Cyprus - Radikal
FM Gul: No recognition of Greek Cyprus - Radikal
Paris says Armenian 'genocide' can wait - Zaman
Greek Cypriots march against Turkey's EU bid - Cumhuriyet
Sunnis won't boycott Iraqi elections, Sadr still uncertain -
Zaman
400 insurgents return to Fallujah - Yeni Safak
Israeli terror in Damascus - Yeni Safak
8 Afghanis die under Americans' detention - Yeni Safak
Cuba prepares against US attack - Yeni Safak

BRIEFING

Ankara on the eve of EU summit: PM Tayyip Erdogan told EU
envoys on Tuesday that Turkey 'will not hesitate to say no'
to an EU decision on opening entry talks if 'unacceptable
issues' are included in the EU statement. Erdogan said his
government would continue with political and economic reform
no matter the outcome of the December 16-17 summit. Ankara
is concerned that the final summit declaration will make it
too easy for the EU to suspend negotiations or to offer a
'special partnership' rather than full membership. Today,
international wires report that European Commission
President Jose Manuel Barroso told French TV that 'the time
is right for the European Union to begin accession talks
with Turkey.' 'Turkey's inclusion in Europe will make a big
contribution to peace in our continent and in the world,' he
said. Meanwhile, FM Abdullah Gul assured the parliament on
Tuesday that Turkey would not recognize the Republic of
Cyprus - 'either directly or indirectly' - as long as there
is no final agreement on the reunification of the divided
island. Greek Cypriot leader Papadopoulos said that December
17's EU summit would mark a new era for Turkey's EU
aspirations. During that period, he said, 'the Cyprus issue
will always be before Turkey.' Papers report that the EU
will insist that Ankara sign a protocol that would grant
effective recognition to Cyprus by the spring of 2005.
"Hurriyet" speculates that the Cyprus recognition question
will be resolved by Turkey expressing a willingness to sign
the protocol with the Dutch EU Presidency while submitting a
side-letter clarifying that the protocol does not represent
full recognition of Cyprus.

Grossman's meetings with Turks 'soften rough edges': A call
on U/S Grossman by PM Erdogan's advisors, Egemen Bagis and
Vahit Erdem, had a considerable impact in softening strained
relations between the US and Turkey, "Sabah" reports in a
news commentary. Grossman complained to the Turks about the
recent tone of statements by politicians in Ankara that have
encouraged anti-American sentiment in Turkey. The criticism
was directed primarily against the US military operation in
Fallujah.. AKP lawmakers Bagis and Erdem told Grossman that
most Turks reject anti-American sentiment. They agreed with
Grossman on the need for normalization of Turkish-Armenia
ties, but added that Armenia must first withdraw from

Nagorno-Karabakh and recognize Turkey's borders. Grossman asked the Turks why the ecumenical issue, a historical matter, is so exaggerated in Turkey. He also urged Turkey to re-open Halki Seminary. The lawmakers said that the ecumenical issue is a 'detail' for Turkey, and added that the government is working on the reopening of the seminary. Reminded about US pledges on the PKK, Grossman said the US will keep its word on the issue. Grossman also stressed US support for Turkey's EU membership, but added that the US has refrained from making 'high-profile' contacts with EU countries in an effort not to strengthen the hand of Turkey's opponents.

Shiite leader supports Fallujah operation in Ankara: The Iraqi Shiite leader Abdulaziz el-Hakim, head of the Islamic Revolutionary Council of Iraq (SCIRI), visited Ankara yesterday for talks with PM Erdogan and FM Gul. El-Hakim said after meeting Erdogan that the people in Fallujah have been subjected to great cruelty - not by the Americans, but by the terrorists. 'Many holy places in Fallujah were occupied by terrorist groups, obliging Fallujans to ask for help from the Iraqi government,' el-Hakim said. He later discussed with FM Gul political and security conditions in Iraq.

EU creates 'energy community': The European Union met with Turkey, Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Montenegro, Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo in Athens to create an 'energy community' intended to strengthen the security of energy supply in the Balkans, the European Commission said on Tuesday. The energy community will provide energy connections with South East Europe and, through that region, to the Middle East and Caspian region. The agreement will also help the EU diversify its sources of energy supply. A treaty is to be signed next summer.

EDITORIAL OPINION: EU-Turkey

"The EU, France, and Genocide"
Ali Bayramoglu observed in the Islamist-opinion maker "Yeni Safak" (12/15): "It seems that France has finally come up with a clear position for Turkey to get a date from the EU. That is, by satisfying the pro-Armenian element of French domestic politics through the use of genocide claims. France is also sensitive on the issue of the negotiation date. For domestic political reasons, Paris insists that Turkey be given a date after June 2005 so that the French referendum on the EU Constitution will be over. There is nothing wrong if Turkey is given July 2005 as a negotiation date. Let's not forget that Turkey is a big piece for the EU to digest. The fact is that Turkey continues to take steps toward its EU goal, and December 17 is certainly an important one."

"Chance for Free Europe"
Suleyman Demirel, former President of Turkey, wrote in the liberal-intellectual "Radikal" (12/15): "Turkish democracy presents a model by maintaining Islamic values but preventing these values from being misused in the political arena. However, there are some Western thinkers who cling to a simplified approach and tend to see Islam as a threat. . For centuries Turkey, with its predominantly Muslim population, has held to its inclination toward the Western world. . Turkey's joining the EU will bring the people of Europe and a Muslim community together within the framework of common global values. Turkey's participation will also play a significantly important role to demonstrate that the EU is based on values, institutions, and a democratic civilization rather than on a common religion."

"Strategic Partnership Ended"
Tulin Daloglu observed from Washington in the conservative-sensational "Star" (12/15): "Even though US officials claim that Washington has managed to overcome the shock of the March 1 incident, they don't hesitate to say that no real strategic partner would have acted as Turkey did at that time. This fact cannot be forgotten by Washington. Ankara's steps towards Brussels will be watched with great interest here. Despite Washington's full support for Turkey's EU accession, former US Ambassador Parris and Assistant Secretary Grossman reiterated strongly in speeches last week

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that Turkey doesn't need to put more distance between itself and the US just because it is getting closer to the EU. In fact, Grossman and Parris' messages are very clear: Turkey should not choose between the US and the EU, but should be able to continue its strong dialogue with both. Otherwise, Turkey will be on the losing side. Turkey needs both the EU and the US in order to be powerful in the region. Who knows, maybe Washington is planning to prepare Turkey as a bridge between the EU and the US before it becomes a bridge between east and west. Sounds good!"

"The Prime Minister's State of Mind"

Asli Aydintasbas wrote in the mainstream daily "Sabah" (12/15): "The most interesting question being asked in Ankara in recent days isn't about the latest EU draft for the summit, but rather about the state of mind of Prime Minister Erdogan, who will look at the final EU draft and make Turkey's decision. One foreign diplomat who spoke with Erdogan this week said this: 'I believe he still wants to reach an agreement. But if a good agreement isn't put in front of him, he is also prepared to say no.' Another Western diplomat said 'we're afraid that if a text that he doesn't like comes out, he may just bang on the table and say no. He would look like a hero if he did that, but in the long run this would be bad for Turkey.' Diplomats who have met with the Prime Minister as well as those in his inner circle say that his attitude is 'hardening.' They say that Erdogan has become increasingly convinced that Turkey is facing a kind of 'injustice' by the EU. According to a close advisor, the Prime Minister believes he has taken big risks in getting Turkey to this point, and that the issues brought up in recent days are unfair. The Prime Minister communicated his disappointment in yesterday's AK Party group meeting. European Ambassadors have asked Erdogan to prioritize his list of complaints about the most recent draft, but the PM has said that all of his concerns are equally important. So those who have spoken to Erdogan recently are convinced that he is disappointed in the EU and will walk away from the table if he is faced with something he doesn't like."

EDELMAN